

When they say no

Six answers worth having ready

None of these are about the wine. A buyer says no for reasons with very little to do with what is in the bottle, and the answer is almost always to make the ask smaller and more specific. No numbers here on purpose — use their own.

“We already have a Chardonnay.”

They are hearing you offer a second one of the same thing.

SAY You do, and it is doing the rich, barrel-aged job well. What I would add is not another one of those. An unoaked, high-acid Chardonnay covers the raw bar and the lighter half of your menu, which the one you have cannot reach.

THEN Name the job, not the grape. The gap analysis worksheet finds it before you arrive.

“It is too expensive.”

They are comparing case cost. You need them comparing the glass.

SAY What is your pour cost on the one you have now? Work it per glass rather than per case, then look at what the better bottle does to the average check. The gap is usually smaller than it looks on the invoice.

THEN Move from case price to per-glass and check average. Use their numbers, not ours.

“My guests will not know it.”

They are picturing a dead pour nobody orders.

SAY That is exactly why it goes beside something they do know, not instead of it. The familiar wine carries the list. The one next to it is the reason someone tries something new.

THEN Ask for the slot next to the safe pour, not the safe pour itself.

“We are happy with our current supplier.”

This is not a verdict on the wine. It is a refusal to take on hassle.

SAY I am not asking you to move your business. I am asking for one slot, in the place you just told me is not covered.

THEN Ask for the smallest possible yes. One wine, one position.

“Send me something / leave me a sheet.”

A polite exit. Paper alone almost never converts.

SAY I will, and I will bring a bottle when I do. Which day of the week is quietest for you?

THEN Trade the leave-behind for a date. Book it before you walk out.

“Business is slow right now.”

True, and it is the argument for acting rather than against it.

SAY Then this is the cheapest time to fix it. Changing one by-the-glass pour costs you a single case, and it is bedded in and the staff are trained before you get busy.

THEN Reframe the timing as the reason. Slow weeks are when staff can actually be taught.

AND IF NOTHING LANDS

Open the bottle. A poured glass has never lost an argument to a sell sheet.